RESEARCH

A REPORT OF THE
PLANNING AND RESEARCH BRANCH
MANITOBA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Planning and Research Branch
Manitoba Department of Education
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Intentions of Grade 12 Students: Summary Report 84-02b

INTRODUCTION

For the last five years the Planning and Research Branch has conducted a survey of Grade 12 students for the Universities Grants Commission, in order to obtain information about students' post-high school intentions and plans. Specifically, Grade 12 students were asked about their post-secondary plans, as well as what people or circumstances have an influence on these plans. In addition, students were asked questions regarding post-secondary institutional preferences. It was felt that the findings would be of interest to school counsellors and administrators.

OVERVIEW

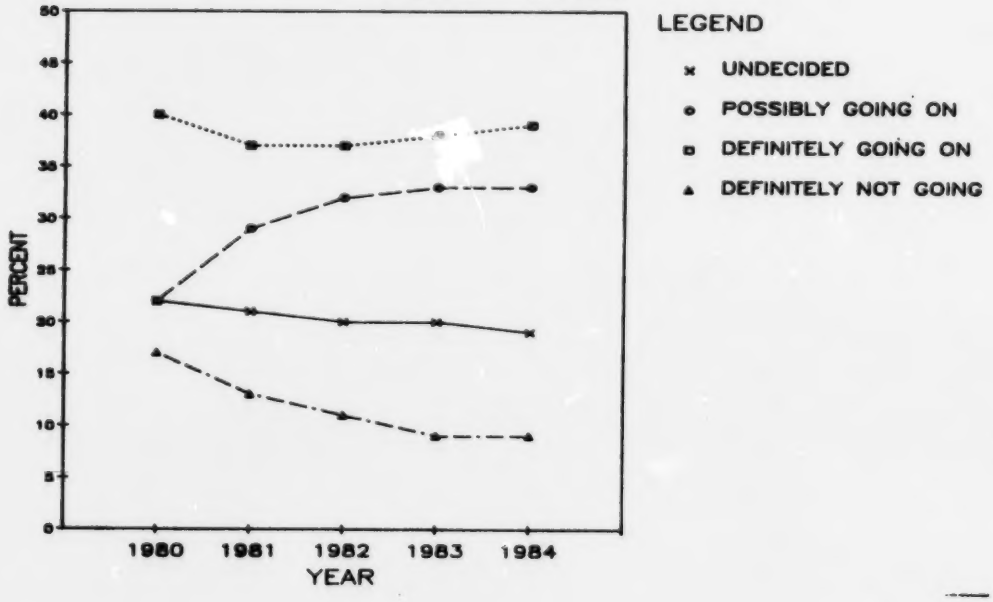
Overall, the five years of data reveal several patterns:

- There is uncertainty among many Grade 12 students concerning their future activities.
- Parents have by far the strongest influence on students' plans. Generally, teachers and counsellors have little influence.
- School courses which students feel help prepare them for further education were an influence on two-thirds of the respondents. Other school factors were not particularly influential.
- Although studies such as this one are fairly accurate in predicting total institutional enrollments, follow-up research in Manitoba and elsewhere indicates that the likelihood of any individual student fulfilling his/her Grade 12 intentions is about 50%.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL PLANS

Approximately 70% of Grade 12 students responding indicated they were considering going on to some form of post-secondary education in the fall of 1984. Of this group, more than half were "definitely" going on. Also, over the past five years, the proportion of students indicating they would definitely not continue their education has decreased.

SUMMARY OF STUDENTS' PLANS
FOR NEXT YEAR
1980–1984



Students in private schools, as well as those in Winnipeg, were most likely to be definite in their decision to attend post-secondary institutions. Most students who responded that they were "undecided" about their post-secondary plans intended to seek employment. For the "undecided" group, workforce participation was indicated as the most likely alternative.

STUDENTS' NON-EDUCATIONAL PLANS

The percentage of students planning on a full-time job directly after high school has decreased over the last five years. Students in the South-eastern and Interlake regions were most likely to plan on immediate full-time employment.

Part-time employment ranked highly in those areas where students were definite either about university participation or about full-time workforce participation. In the former case, students would likely be interested in part-time jobs in addition to university studies, while the latter group would likely be interested in any form of employment. Very little difference appeared between the definite plans of male and female students.

INFLUENCES ON STUDENT CHOICES

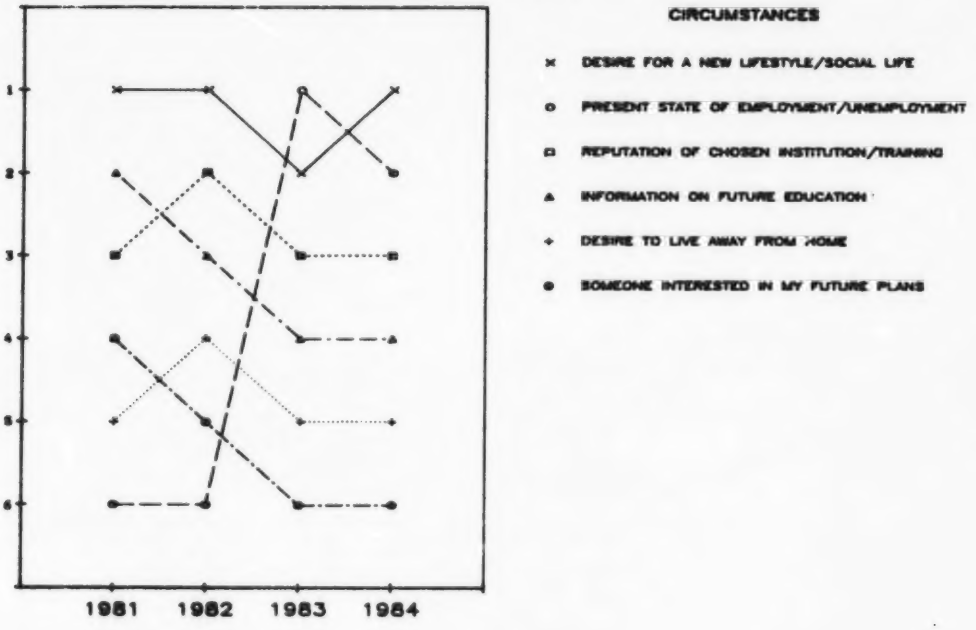
As is generally the case, the primary influence on students' plans is their parents, followed by friends and siblings. In all regions of the province, parents were the foremost influence.

The influence of both school staff and school activities was generally weak. However, in the North, counsellors were perceived as having a greater impact on student plans.

One school activity was viewed as influencing approximately two-thirds of the Grade 12 respondents. This was participation in courses that prepare students for continuing their education.

No single social or economic factor had a major influence on more than half the students. However, the issue of unemployment has been of increasing concern. Information concerning future education or training has had a decreasing influence.

RANK ORDERING OF
CIRCUMSTANCES HAVING SOME INFLUENCE ON PLANS OF STUDENTS
1981 – 1984



Certain events or situations could affect student plans. If their desired post-secondary choice is unavailable, or if unemployment increases in their chosen occupation, student plans could be affected.

INSTITUTIONAL CHOICES

About 75% of students definitely planning on going on to post-secondary education indicated that they would attend a university. However, students who were "undecided" about their participation most often indicated a community college preference.

FIRST CHOICE INSTITUTION TYPE
FOR STUDENTS "UNDECIDED" ABOUT OR "DEFINITELY GOING ON"
TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN SEPTEMBER 1984

UNDECIDED

DEFINITELY GOING ON

University of Manitoba and Red River Community College are consistently students' first choice institutions, with the exception of the Southwest region. While students in Southwest region ranked the University of Manitoba most often as first choice institution, they ranked Assiniboine Community College a close second, with Brandon University in third place. Students in the North region, while selecting University of Manitoba and Red River Community College in first and second place, went on to rank both Keewatin Community College and Brandon University third.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

The data from these studies have important implications for the way in which schools attempt to address students' post-secondary needs and interests. Some of the major implications are:

The student body is heterogeneous both in terms of intentions and of needs. There are students who have clear career or educational goals, for whom the primary need may be information about such concerns as entry and prerequisites. However, there are many students whose plans are uncertain and open to change. For these students, information is not necessarily going to be helpful, as they may make decisions based on other factors. Indeed, the data indicate that information ranks relatively low as an influence.

On the other hand, high school experience does have an impact. Students report that courses which make them feel prepared for post-secondary schooling do influence their decisions. Such courses generally have a greater impact than do counsellors or teachers.

It is important, then, that schools have a broader conception of how they can assist students after high school. This conception should include much more than counselling and career information; it should focus on the entire secondary school experience, including courses, programs, work experience, peer relationships, and improved self-concept.

Finally, it is absolutely crucial to recognize that many students will change their plans considerably within a year or two of leaving school. School programs which emphasize flexibility and alternatives for students are most likely to serve students' ultimate interests.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In addition to this discussion of results, other information can be supplied for your use. Upon request, the Planning and Research Branch can supply data on an individual school or division. As well, tables detailing provincial results can be obtained by calling the Planning and Research Branch, (944-6174).